

## Maine Delegation Welcomes Presidential Disaster Declaration

Thursday, March 25 2010

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WASHINGTON, D.C. &ndash; U.S. Senators Olympia J. Snowe and Susan Collins and Representatives Mike Michaud and Chellie Pingree today applauded a Presidential Disaster Declaration for five Maine counties, making them eligible for federal assistance following storms occurring from late February through early March. The severe winter storm system resulted in icing, severe winds, snow, and flooding in Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and York Counties.

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The disaster declaration will allow state and local governments to be reimbursed by the federal government for costs related to damage of public infrastructure from the storms.

&ldquo;This disaster declaration means that necessary assistance will immediately be made available to our state and communities struggling with the financial burden of more than \$2.3 million in infrastructure damage from these storms,&rdquo; said Senators Snowe and Collins, and Representatives Michaud Pingree in a joint statement. &ldquo;This assistance will provide critical support to our state&rsquo;s efforts to clear dangerous debris and repair infrastructure. We welcome the President&rsquo;s announcement and applaud the Administration for acting quickly on our request.&rdquo;

Following is the full text of the letter that the Maine Congressional delegation sent to the President earlier this month urging support for the Governor&rsquo;s request for federal disaster assistance:

March 16, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama

President of the United States

The White House

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express support for a request that Governor John Baldacci submitted for federal disaster assistance on behalf of Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and York counties in the State of Maine. These counties experienced significant and widespread damage resulting from a major snow and ice storm which affected the state from February 23 through March 2, 2010.

According to the National Weather Service, a major storm system affected the entire northeast region of the United States from February 23 &ndash; March 2, 2010. This storm system brought high winds and heavy rain and snow, resulting in flooding and significant damage to roads and energy infrastructure. Some areas of Maine received seven inches of rain, and other areas recorded 24 inches of snow. Wind gusts near 80 miles per hour were recorded. At the peak of the storm, more than 145,000 customers were without power, equating to 335,000 people or over a quarter of the state's population. Many areas were without power for four to five days.

On March 3, 2010, the Governor requested a joint federal, state, and local Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) survey of the damaged areas. This assessment was conducted from March 8 - 12, 2010. Town and state agency reports of damages, verified by the PDA, equate to over \$2.3 million or \$1.81 per capita statewide. Preliminary assessments show significant costs for debris clearance and emergency protective measures, in addition to severe impacts to roads and bridges in the affected counties. The Governor has determined that this event is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is "beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments," and has requested Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation and Small Business Administration disaster assistance. The Governor intends to implement the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program on a statewide basis and Maine has a FEMA-approved Standard State Mitigation Plan in place.

We urge you to give expeditious consideration and approval of the Governor's request that you declare a major disaster for Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and York counties.

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